



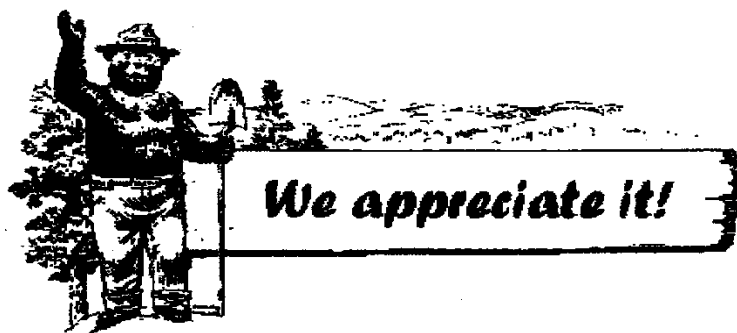
Trail Talk

November & December

2014

The winter months are hard to plan workdays for since it is a busy time of year and the weather doesn't always cooperate. Sometimes in northern Georgia we can have gorgeous weather in November and December but often it can be dreary or very cold. This has definitely been the case for us lately. We have had some nice days but they have not all fallen on the scheduled work days. During this period we cancelled two workdays, December's workday for Dry Creek and November's workday for Team Conasauga. We did have some great stewardship to wrap up 2014, Jim Holland got out with a small group to crosscut some trees in November, and Team Conasauga's December workday was a success, which I will talk about on the next page.

The biggest happening was definitely the Annual Team Conasauga Board and Forest Service meeting. We sat down together on the evening of December 11 and hashed out the workday schedule for 2015. Most of the new dates and project locations are listed towards the back of this and all subsequent newsletters. I am trying something new this year; I am also listing workdays coordinated by our great volunteer crew leader **Larry Wheat** in the Dry Creek area. This made the workday page very busy so I only listed the first half of the year. If you want to get a head start on planning out 2015 beyond what I listed here, the full list of Team Conasauga 2015 dates can be found at www.teamconasauga.org or you can contact Larry Wheat or me for more information. Below the workday dates you will also find a list of volunteer training opportunities that are specific to the Conasauga Ranger District. So please check your certification cards and stay tuned for more information at www.cotrails.org.



> > > > November < < < <



November wasn't the busiest stewardship month on the Conasauga Ranger District. However a few folks did get out. On November 5th, **Jim Holland** led a group to clean up some blowdown on the Penitentiary Branch Trail. He was joined by **Robert Collins, Kathleen Corcoran, Zoey Zardis, and Steve Davis**. They cut many trees, removed one very nasty Virginia pine crown hanging over the trail, and had a great time doing it. Thank you so much for your work and I hope to see you all in March when we are back on the Penitentiary Branch Trail working waterbars.

In the intro I mentioned that we cancelled the November Working Weekend # 74 for Team Conasauga but that wasn't the whole truth. We received a very cold arctic blast that weekend that made us decide to cancel Saturday, but we did have one diehard who braved the elements on Friday, November 14. **Miles Wise** joined me that Friday to continue our efforts to rehab the Beech Bottom closure area. It was a breezy 22° at the trailhead when we got started and throughout the day the temperature barely got above 30°. However the sun did shine bright and once you got moving it wasn't that bad. We had a nice day on the river closing off illegal campsites and improving signage in the closure area. Thank you for braving the cold with me.



> > > > **December** < < < <



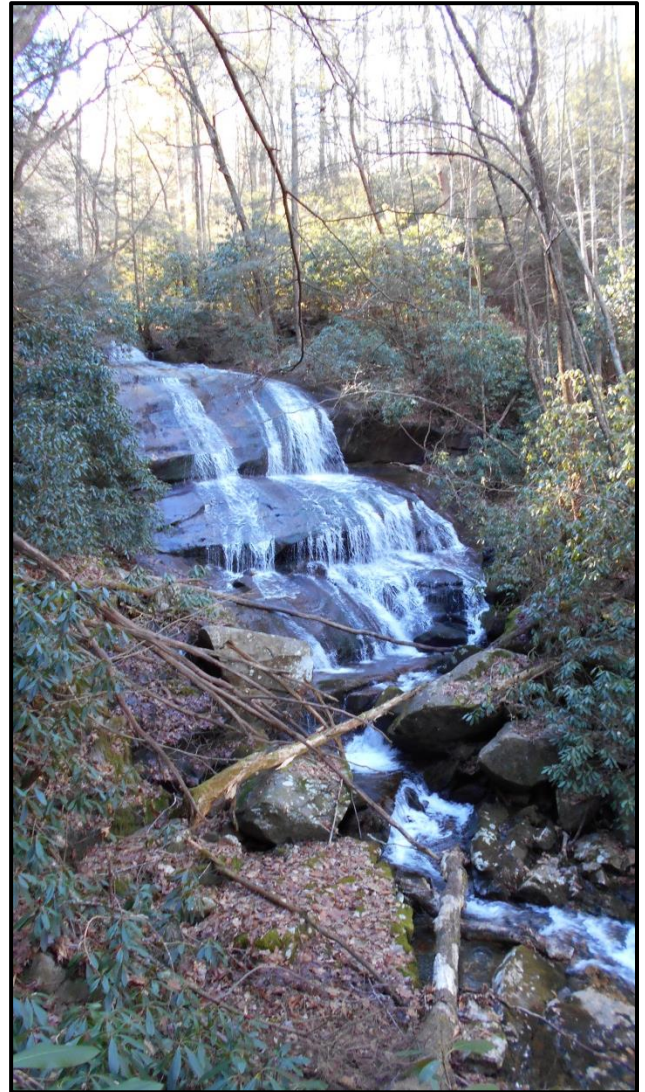
We had one volunteer event in December with Team Conasauga on the 13th. My original thoughts were to build on the momentum made over the previous month at the Beech Bottom closure area. However, we were joined that day by our partners from the Southern Area Wilderness Stewards (SAWS) and they suggested improving some of the tread on the reroute they completed for us two years ago. I agreed, feeling that would be a great use of our time that day. **Wanda Brown, Travis Sanchez, Justin Sanchez, and Landen Sanchez** attended as well as our partners from SAWS **Bill Hodge, Charlie Smillie, and Stephanie Campbell**. We started the day by improving the reroute tread now that it has settled for two years. We widened the two approach ramps, removed some crowning and some trail sloughing that had occurred. Justin and Landen did a great job piling more brush on the old trail to keep hikers on the new trail. After lunch we had time to take care of a few freshly fallen trees across the first mile of Beech Bottom trail and rake a few waterbars. Thank you all for your hard work and stewardship. I am also very happy to announce that we are doing a collaborative workday with Team Conasauga and the Southern Area Wilderness Stewards (SAWS) next year on March 7, 2015 on the Penitentiary Branch Trail. I am looking forward to coming together and tackling the almost 200 waterbars on that trail.

See you then!!!



Dates for the 2015 Workdays

- January 3, 2015** – Pinhoti Work Day, contact Larry Wheat at l.wheat@mindspring.com
- January 10, 2015** – Hickory Ridge Trail (waterbars)
- February 7, 2015** – Iron Mountain Trail (waterbars and trimming)
- February 7, 2015** - Pinhoti Work Day, contact Larry Wheat at l.wheat@mindspring.com
- March 4, 2015** - Pinhoti Work Day, contact Larry Wheat at l.wheat@mindspring.com
- March 7, 2015** – Penitentiary Branch Trail (waterbars)
In conjunction with **Southern Area Wilderness Stewards (SAWS)**
- April 4, 2015** – Dry Creek Work Day, contact Larry Wheat at l.wheat@mindspring.com
- April 11, 2015** – Tearbritches Trail (waterbars)
- May 1-2, 2015** – TBA / Horseshoe Bend Trail (waterbars)
(Working Weekend # 75)
- May 2, 2015** – Dry Creek Work Day, contact Larry Wheat at l.wheat@mindspring.com
- June 6, 2015** – East Cowpen Trail, Three Forks TH (slingblade)
(National Trail Day®)
- June 6, 2015** - Dry Creek Work Day, contact Larry Wheat at l.wheat@mindspring.com
(National Trail Day)



2015 Volunteer Training Opportunities:

January 31, 2015 – CPR/First Aid Certification

March 7, 2015 – Chainsaw Certification

May 9, 2015 – Crosscut Certification

For more information contact **Karen Larsen** at
706-695-6736 or kalarsen@fs.fed.us



For more information on activities and events happening on the Conasauga Ranger District, please check out the following links to the various associations who are committed to helping us provide safe, enjoyable trail experiences for our forest users...

Team Conasauga: www.teamconasauga.org or www.facebook.com/teamconasauga

Benton MacKaye Trail Association (BMTA): www.bmta.org

Backcountry Horsemen of Northwest Georgia (BCHNWG): www.bchnwg.org

Backcountry Horsemen of North Georgia (BCHNG): www.bchng.org

Northwest Georgia Southern Off-Road Bike Association (NWGA SORBA): www.nwgasorba.org

Georgia Pinhoti Trail Association: www.pinhoti.info

Appalachian Trail Association (GATC): www.georgia-atclub.org

Ellijay Mountain Biking Association (EMBA): www.ellijaymountainbike.org

Southern Off-Road Bike Association (SORBA): www.sorba.org or www.ngwasorba.org

Co-Trails: www.cotrails.org



Any interested people please contact me at kvasalinda@fs.fed.us. Thanks and see you next time.

~Kevin~